

*An* ARNOLD  
BENNETT  
CALENDAR



A quotation from  
Arnold Bennett  
for every day in  
the year





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*The Arnold Bennett Calendar*

BY ARNOLD BENNETT

NOVELS

THE OLD WIVES' TALE  
HELEN WITH THE HIGH HAND  
THE MATADOR OF THE FIVE TOWNS  
THE BOOK OF CARLOTTA  
BURIED ALIVE  
A GREAT MAN  
LEONORA  
WHOM GOD HATH JOINED  
A MAN FROM THE NORTH  
ANNA OF THE FIVE TOWNS  
THE GLIMPSE

POCKET PHILOSOPHIES

HOW TO LIVE ON 24 HOURS A DAY  
THE HUMAN MACHINE  
LITERARY TASTE  
MENTAL EFFICIENCY

PLAYS

CUPID AND COMMONSENSE  
WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS  
POLITE FARCES  
MILESTONES  
THE HONEYMOON

MISCELLANEOUS

THE TRUTH ABOUT AN AUTHOR  
THE FEAST OF ST. FRIEND

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY  
NEW YORK

Bennett, Frank Arnold  
"

*The  
Arnold Bennett  
Calendar*

*Compiled By  
Frank Bennett*



*New York  
George H. Doran Company*

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**E**NOCH ARNOLD BENNETT was born at Hanley-in-the-Potteries (one of the "Five Towns" frequently appearing in his writings) on 27th May 1867. He was educated at the endowed Middle School, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and matriculated in the London University. From school he went into the office of his father, who practised as a solicitor at Hanley, and stayed with him until 1889, when he took a post in a solicitor's office in London, which he held until 1893. In that year he abandoned the law finally to become assistant editor of *Woman*, and succeeded to the editorship in 1896. This post he resigned in 1900 to devote himself exclusively to literature. In the meantime several of his works had been issued, the first being "A Man from the North" (1898) and a handbook, "Journalism for Women," followed in the next year by the publication of a volume of plays, "Polite Farces," his first experiments in drama. Afterwards appeared in rapid succession nine other novels, two volumes of short stories, seven volumes of belles-lettres, and seven fantasias. Besides these he wrote two plays, "Cupid and Common-Sense," produced by the Stage Society in 1908, and "What the Public Wants," also produced by the Stage Society in 1909, and afterwards by Mr. Hawtrey at the New Royalty Theatre. Both

*these plays were subsequently staged in Glasgow, and by Miss Horniman's Company. The most important of his publications include:—among novels, "Leonora," "A Great Man," "Sacred and Profane Love," "Whom God Hath Joined——," "The Old Wives' Tale," and "Clayhanger"; among the belles-lettres, "The Truth about an Author," "Literary Taste," "The Reasonable Life," "The Human Machine," and "How to Live on Twenty-Four Hours a Day" (the last four contributed originally to T. P.'s Weekly, and containing indications of Mr. Bennett's theories of life); and in the short stories, "Tales of the Five Towns," and "The Grim Smile of the Five Towns." Mr. Bennett has very definite leanings towards Socialism, and, under a pseudonym, writes regularly for The New Age. He also contributes from time to time to the most important progressive weekly and monthly magazines.*

*F. C. B.*

*The Arnold Bennett Calendar*



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# January

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## *One*

The individual who scoffs at New Year's resolutions resembles the woman who says she doesn't look under the bed at nights; the truth is not in him.

## *Two*

To give pleasure is the highest end of any work of art, because the pleasure procured from any art is tonic, and transforms the life into which it enters.

## *Three*

There are only two fundamental differences in the world — the difference between sex and sex, and the difference between youth and age.

## *Four*

The only class of modern play in which it is possible to be both quite artistic and quite marketable, is the farce.

*Five*

To enjoy a work of imagination is no pastime, rather a sweet but fatiguing labour. After a play of Shakespeare or a Wagnerian opera repose is needed. Only a madman like Louis of Bavaria could demand *Tristan* twice in one night.

*Six*

Great books do not spring from something accidental in the great men who wrote them. They are the effluence of their very core, the expression of the life itself of the authors.

*Seven*

It is within the experience of everyone that when pleasure and pain reach a certain intensity they are indistinguishable.

*Eight*

One of the main obstacles to the cultivation of poetry in the average sensible man is an absurdly inflated notion of the ridiculous.

*Nine*

The crudest excitement of the imaginative faculty is to be preferred to a swinish preoccupation with the gross physical existence.

*Ten*

The brain is the diplomatist which arranges relations between our instinctive self and the universe, and it fulfils its mission when it provides for the maximum of freedom to the instincts with the minimum of friction.

*Eleven*

A woman who has beauty wants to frame it in beauty. The eye is a sensualist, and its appetites, once aroused, grow. A beautiful woman takes the same pleasure in the sight of another beautiful woman as a man does; only jealousy or fear prevents her from admitting the pleasure.

*Twelve*

The beginning of wise living lies in the control of the brain by the will. ✓

*Thirteen*

To utter a jeremiad upon the decadence of taste, to declare that literature is going to the dogs because a fourth-rate novel has been called a masterpiece and has made someone's fortune, would be absurd. I have a strong faith that taste is as good as ever it was, and that literature will continue on its way undisturbed.

*Fourteen*

There is a loveliness of so imperious, absolute, dazzling a kind that it banishes from the hearts of men all moral conceptions, all considerations of right and wrong, and leaves therein nothing but worship and desire.

*Fifteen*

When homage is reiterated, when the pleasure of obeying a command and satisfying a caprice is begged for, when roses are strewn, and even necks put down in the path, one forgets to be humble; one forgets that in meekness alone lies the sole good; one confuses deserts with the hazards of heredity.



*Sixteen*

There are men who are capable of loving a machine more deeply than they can love a woman. They are among the happiest men on earth.

*Seventeen*

The uncultivated reader is content to live wholly in and for the moment, sentence by sentence. Keep him amused and he will ask no more. You may delude him, you may withhold from him every single thing to which he is rightfully entitled, but he will not care. The more crude you are, the better will he be pleased.

*Eighteen*

It is only in the stress of fine ideas and emotions that a man may be truly said to live.

*Nineteen*

Oh, innocence! Oh, divine ignorance! Oh, refusal! None knows your value save her who has bartered you! And herein is the woman's tragedy.

*Twenty*

To extract from the brain, at will and by will, concentration on a given idea for even so short a period as half an hour is an exceedingly difficult feat — and a fatiguing! It needs perseverance.

*Twenty-one*

A merely literary crudity will affect the large public neither one way nor the other, since the large public is entirely uninterested in questions of style; but all other crudities appeal strongly to that public.

*Twenty-two*

*“Cupid and Commonsense” produced.*

Everyone who has driven a motorcar knows the uncanny sensation that ensues when for the first time in your life you engage the clutch, and the Thing beneath you begins mysteriously and formidably to move. It is at once an astonishment, a terror, and a delight. I felt like that as I watched the progress of my first play.

*Twenty-three*

Can you see the sun over the viaduct at Loughborough Junction of a morning, and catch its rays in the Thames off Dewar's whisky monument, and not shake with the joy of life? If so, you and Shakespeare are not yet in communication.

*Twenty-four*

Adults have never yet invented any institution, festival or diversion specially for the benefit of children. The egoism of adults makes such an effort impossible, and the ingenuity and pliancy of children make it unnecessary. The pantomime, for example, which is now pre-eminently a diversion for children, was created by adults for the amusement of adults. Children have merely accepted it and appropriated it. Children, being helpless, are of course fatalists and imitators. They take what comes, and they do the best they can with it. And when they have made something their own that was adult, they stick to it like leeches.

*Twenty-five*

The living speak of the uncanniness of the dead. It does not occur to them that manifestations of human existence may be uncanny to the dead.

*Twenty-six*

There is no royal road to the control of the brain. There is no patent dodge about it, and no complicated function which a plain person may not comprehend. It is simply a question of: "I will, *I* will, and *I* will."

*Twenty-seven*

I knew that when love lasted, the credit of the survival was due far more often to the woman than to the man. The woman must husband herself, dole herself out, economise herself so that she might be splendidly wasteful when need was. The woman must plan, scheme, devise, invent, reconnoitre, take precautions; and do all this sincerely and lovingly in the name and honour of love. A passion for her is a campaign; and her deadliest enemy is satiety.

*Twenty-eight*

Efficient living, living up to one's best standard, getting the last ounce of power out of the machine with the minimum of friction: these things depend on the disciplined and vigorous condition of the brain.

*Twenty-nine*

In the world of books, as in every other world, one-half does not know how the other half lives. In literary matters the literate seldom suspect the extreme simplicity and *naïveté* of the illiterate. They wilfully blind themselves to it; they are afraid to face it.

*Thirty*

The mysteriousness of woman vanishes the instant you brutally face it. Boys and ageing celibates are obsessed by the mysteriousness of woman. The obsession is a sign either of immaturity or of morbidity. The mysteriousness of woman, — take her, and see then if she is mysterious!

*Thirty-one*

Train journeys have too often been sorrowful for me, so much so that the conception itself of a train, crawling over the country like a snake, or flying across it like a winged monster, fills me with melancholy. Trains loaded with human parcels of sadness and illusion and brief joy, wandering about, crossing, and occasionally colliding in the murk of existence; trains warmed and lighted in winter; trains open to catch the air of your own passage in summer; night-trains that pierce the night with your yellow, glaring eyes, and waken mysterious villages, and leave the night behind and run into the dawn as into a station; trains that carry bread and meats for the human parcels, and pillows and fountains of fresh water; trains that sweep haughtily and wearily indifferent through the landscapes and the towns, sufficient unto yourselves, hasty, panting, formidable, and yet mournful entities: I have understood you in your arrogance and your pathos!

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# *February*

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## *One*

The ecstasy of longing is better than the assuaging of desire.

## *Two*

As regards facts and ideas, the great mistake made by the average well-intentioned reader is that he is content with the names of things instead of occupying himself with the causes of things.

## *Three*

Time and increasing knowledge of the true facts have dissipated for me the melancholy and affecting legend of literary talent going a-begging because of the indifference of publishers. O young author of talent, would that I could find you and make you understand how the publisher yearns for you as the lover for his love.

*Four*

The brain can be disciplined by learning the habit of obedience. And it can learn the habit of obedience by the practice of concentration.

*Five*

You can attach any ideas you please to music, but music, if you will forgive me saying so, rejects them all equally. Art has to do with emotions not with ideas, and the great defect of literature is that it can only express emotions by means of ideas. What makes music the greatest of all the arts is that it can express emotions without ideas. Literature can appeal to the soul only through the mind. Music goes direct. Its language is a language which the soul alone understands, but which the soul can never translate.

*Six*

If a man does not spend at least as much time in actively and definitely thinking about what he has read as he spent in reading, he is simply insulting his author.



*S e v e n*

He was of that small and lonely minority of men who never know ambition, ardour, zeal, yearning, tears; whose convenient desires are capable of immediate satisfaction; of whom it may be said that they purchase a second-rate happiness cheap at the price of an incapacity for deep feeling.

*E i g h t*

No man, except a greater author, can teach an author his business.

*N i n e*

Size is the quality which most strongly and surely appeals to the imagination of the multitude. Of all modern monuments the Eiffel Tower and the Big Wheel have aroused the most genuine curiosity and admiration: they are the biggest. As with this monstrous architecture of metals, so with the fabric of ideas and emotions: the attention of the whole crowd can only be caught by an audacious hugeness, an eye-smiting enormity of dimensions so gross as to be nearly physical.

*Ten*

Genius apart, woman is usually more touchingly lyrical than man in the yearning for the ideal.

*Eleven*

I had fast in my heart's keeping the new truth that in the body, and the instincts of the body, there should be no shame but rather a frank, joyous pride.

*Twelve*

A person is idle because his thoughts dwell habitually on the instant pleasures of idleness.

*Thirteen*

By love I mean a noble and sensuous passion, absorbing the energies of the soul, fulfilling destiny, and reducing all that has gone before it to the level of a mere prelude.

*Fourteen*

For myself, I have never valued work for its own sake, and I never shall.

*Fifteen*

Having once decided to achieve a certain task, achieve it at all costs of tedium and distaste. The gain in self-confidence of having accomplished a tiresome labour is immense. ✓

*Sixteen*

All who look into their experience will admit that the failure to replace old habits by new ones is due to the fact that at the critical moment the brain does not remember; it simply forgets.

*Seventeen*

Many writers, and many clever writers, use the art of literature merely to gain an end which is connected with some different art, or with no art. Such a writer, finding himself burdened with a message prophetic, didactic, or reforming, discovers suddenly that he has the imaginative gift, and makes his imagination the servant of his intellect, or of emotions which are not artistic emotions.

*Eighteen*

I only value mental work for the more full and more intense consciousness of being alive which it gives me.

*Nineteen*

Whatever the vagaries of human nature, the true philosopher is never surprised by them. And one vagary is not more strange than another.

*Twenty*

You can control nothing but your own mind. Even your two-year-old babe may defy you by the instinctive force of its personality.

*Twenty-one*

To take the common grey things which people know and despise, and, without tampering, to disclose their epic significance, their essential grandeur — that is realism as distinguished from idealism or romanticism. It may scarcely be, it probably is not, the greatest art of all; but it is art precious and indisputable.

*T w e n t y - t w o*

There are few mental exercises better than learning great poetry or prose by heart.

*T w e n t y - t h r e e*

The British public will never be convinced by argument. But two drops of perspiration on the cheeks of a nice-looking girl with a torn skirt and a crushed hat will make it tremble for the safety of its ideals, and twenty drops will persuade it to sign anything for the restoration of decency. You surely don't suppose that *argument* will be of any use!

*T w e n t y - f o u r*

Some people have a gift of conjuring with conversations. They are almost always frankly and openly interested in themselves. You may seek to foil them; you may even violently wrench the conversation into other directions. But every effort will be useless. They will beat you. You had much better lean back in your chair and enjoy their legerdemain.

*Twenty-five*

The voice of this spirit says that it has lost every illusion about life, and that life seems only the more beautiful. It says that activity is but another form of contemplation, pain but another form of pleasure, power but another form of weakness, hate but another form of love, and that it is well these things should be so. It says there is no end, only a means; and that the highest joy is to suffer, and the supreme wisdom is to exist. If you will but live, it cries, that grave but yet passionate voice — if you will but live! Were there a heaven, and you reached it, you could do no more than live. The true heaven is here where you live, where you strive and lose, and weep and laugh. And the true hell is here, where you forget to live, and blind your eyes to the omnipresent and terrible beauty of existence.

*Twenty-six*

The most important preliminary to self-development is the faculty of concentrating at will.

*Twenty-seven*

Diaries, save in experienced hands, are apt to get themselves done with the very minimum of mental effort. They also tend to an exaggeration of egotism, and if they are left lying about they tend to strife.

*Twenty-eight*

The English world of home is one of the most perfectly organized microcosms on this planet, not excepting the Indian *purdah*. The product of centuries of culture, it is regarded, not too absurdly, as the fairest flower of Christian civilisation. It exists chiefly, of course, for women, but it could never have been what it is had not men bound themselves to respect the code which they made for it. It is the fountain of refinement and of consolation, the nursery of affection. It has the peculiar faculty of nourishing itself, for it implicitly denies the existence of anything beyond its doorstep, save the constitution, a bishop, a rector, the sea-side, Switzerland, and the respectful poor.

*Twenty-nine*

I have always been a bookman. From adolescence books have been one of my passions. Books not merely — and perhaps not chiefly — as vehicles of learning or knowledge, but books as books, books as entities, books as beautiful things, books as historical antiquities, books as repositories of memorable associations. Questions of type, ink, paper, margins, watermarks, paginations, bindings, are capable of really agitating me.



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# *March*

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## *One*

It is characteristic of the literary artist with a genuine vocation that his large desire is, not to express in words any particular thing, but to express *himself*, the sum of his sensations. He feels the vague, disturbing impulse to write long before he has chosen his first subject from the thousands of subjects which present themselves, and which in the future he is destined to attack.

## *Two*

In the mental world what counts is not numbers but co-ordination.

## *Three*

In England, nearly all the most interesting people are social reformers: and the only circles of society in which you are not bored, in which there is real conversation, are the circles of social reform.

*Four*

Anthology construction is one of the pleasantest hobbies that a person who is not mad about golf and bridge — that is to say, a thinking person — can possibly have.

*Five*

That part of my life which I conduct by myself, without reference — or at any rate without direct reference — to others, I can usually manage in such a way that the gods do not positively weep at the spectacle thereof.

*Six*

It's quite impossible to believe that a man is a genius, if you've been to school with him, or even known his father.

*Seven*

It is the privilege of only the greatest painters not to put letters on the corners of their pictures in order to keep other painters from taking the credit for them afterwards.

*Eight*

Your own mind has the power to transmute every external phenomenon to its own purposes.

*Nine*

Anything would be a success in London on Sunday night. People are so grateful.

*Ten*

The one cheerful item in a universe of stony facts is that no one can harm anybody except himself.

*Eleven*

The eye that has learned to look life full in the face without a quiver of the lid should find nothing repulsive. Everything that is, is the ordered and calculable result of environment. Nothing can be abhorrent, nothing blameworthy, nothing contrary to nature. Can we exceed nature? In the presence of the primeval and ever-continuing forces of nature, can we maintain our fantastic conceptions of sin and of justice? We are, and that is all we should dare to say.

*Twelve*

The art of life, the art of extracting all its power from the human machine, does not lie chiefly in processes of bookish-culture, nor in contemplations of the beauty and majesty of existence. It lies chiefly in keeping the peace, the whole peace, and nothing but the peace, with those with whom one is "thrown."

*Thirteen*

We have our ideals now, but when they are mentioned we feel self-conscious and uncomfortable, like a school-boy caught praying.

*Fourteen*

After the crest of the wave the trough — it must be so; but how profound the instinct which complains!

*Fifteen*

The performance of some pianists is so wonderful that it seems as if they were crossing Niagara on a tight-rope, and you tremble lest they should fall off.

*S i x t e e n*

The secret of calm cheerfulness is kindness; no person can be consistently cheerful and calm who does not consistently think kind thoughts.

*S e v e n t e e n*

It is indubitable that a large amount of what is known as self-improvement is simply self-indulgence — a form of pleasure which only incidentally improves a particular part of the human machine, and even that part to the neglect of far more important parts.

*E i g h t e e n*

The average man has this in common with the most exceptional genius, that his career in its main contours is governed by his instincts.

*N i n e t e e n*

The most beautiful things, and the most vital things, and the most lasting things are often mysterious and inexplicable and sudden.

*Twenty*

An accurate knowledge of *any* subject, coupled with a carefully nurtured sense of the relativity of that subject to other subjects, implies an enormous self-development.

*Twenty-one*

The great artist may force you to laugh, or to wipe away a tear, but he accomplishes these minor feats by the way. What he mainly does is to *see* for you. If, in presenting a scene, he does not disclose aspects of it which you would not have observed for yourself, then he falls short of success. In a physical and psychical sense power is visual, the power of an eye seeing things always afresh, virginally as though on the very morn of creation.

*Twenty-two*

It is well, when one is judging a friend, to remember that he is judging you with the same god-like and superior impartiality.

*Twenty-three*

He who speaks, speaks twice. His words convey his thoughts, and his tone conveys his mental attitude towards the person spoken to.

*Twenty-four*

The man who loses his temper often thinks he is doing something rather fine and majestic. On the contrary, so far is this from being the fact, he is merely making an ass of himself.

*Twenty-five*

The female sex is prone to be inaccurate and careless of apparently trivial detail, because this is the general tendency of mankind. In men destined for a business or a profession, the proclivity is harshly discouraged at an early stage. In women, who usually are not destined for anything whatever, it enjoys a merry life, and often refuses to be improved out of existence when the sudden need arises. No one by taking thought can deracinate the mental habits of, say, twenty years.

*Twenty-six*

Kindliness of heart is not the greatest of human qualities — and its general effect on the progress of the world is not entirely beneficent — but it is the greatest of human qualities in friendship.

*Twenty-seven*

There is a certain satisfaction in hopelessness amid the extreme of misery. You press it to you as the martyr clutched the burning fagot. You enjoy it. You savour, piquantly, your woe, your shame, your abjectness, the failure of your philosophy. You celebrate the perdition of the man in you. You want to talk about it brazenly; even to exaggerate it, and to swagger over it.

*Twenty-eight*

The great public is no fool. It is huge and simple and slow in mental processes, like a good-humoured giant, easy to please and grateful for diversion. But it has a keen sense of its own dignity; it will not be trifled with; it resents forever the tongue in the cheek.



*Twenty-nine*

The beauty of horses, timid creatures, sensitive and graceful and irrational as young girls, is a thing apart; and what is strange is that their vast strength does not seem incongruous with it. To be above that proud and lovely organism, listening, apprehensive, palpitating, nervous far beyond the human, to feel one's self almost part of it by intimate contact, to yield to it, and make it yield, to draw from it into one's self some of its exultant vitality — in a word, to ride — I can comprehend a fine enthusiasm for that.

*Thirty*

The respectable portion of the male sex in England may be divided into two classes, according to its method and manner of complete immersion in water. One class, the more dashing, dashes into a cold tub every morning. Another, the more cleanly, sedately takes a warm bath every Saturday night. There can be no doubt that the former class lends tone and distinction to the country, but the latter is the nation's backbone.

*Thirty-one*

Although you may easily practise upon the credulity of a child in matters of fact, you cannot cheat his moral and social judgment. He will add you up, and he will add anybody up, and he will estimate conduct, upon principles of his own and in a manner terribly impartial. Parents have no sterner nor more discerning critics than their own children.

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# *April*

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## *One*

A person's character is, and can be, nothing else but the total result of his habits of thought.

## *Two*

Beware of hope, and beware of ambition! Each is excellently tonic, like German competition, in moderation, but all of you are suffering from self-indulgence in the first, and very many of you are ruining your constitutions with the second.

## *Three*

As a matter of fact, people "indulge" in remorse; it is a somewhat vicious form of spiritual pleasure.

## *Four*

When a thing is thoroughly well done it often has the air of being a miracle.

*Five*

After all the shattering discoveries of science and conclusions of philosophy, mankind has still to live with dignity amid hostile nature, and in the presence of an unknowable power, and mankind can only succeed in this tremendous feat by the exercise of faith and of that mutual goodwill which is based in sincerity and charity.

*Six*

All the days that are to come will more or less resemble the present day, until you die.

*Seven*

In literature, when nine hundred and ninety-nine souls ignore you, but the thousandth buys your work, or at least borrows it—that is called enormous popularity.

*Eight*

If life is not a continual denial of the past, then it is nothing.

*Nine*

The profoundest belief of the average man is that virtue ought never to be its own reward. Shake that belief and you commit a cardinal sin; you disturb his mental quietude.

*Ten*

It is notorious that the smaller the community, and the more completely it is self-contained, the deeper will be its preoccupation with its own trifling affairs.

*Eleven*

To my mind, most societies with a moral aim are merely clumsy machines for doing simple jobs with the maximum of friction, expense and inefficiency. I should define the majority of these societies as a group of persons each of whom expects the others to do something very wonderful.

*Twelve*

There is nothing like a sleepless couch for a clear vision of one's environment.

*Thirteen*

The supreme muddlers of living are often people of quite remarkable intellectual faculty, with a quite remarkable gift of being wise for others.

*Fourteen*

Our leading advertisers have richly proved that the public will believe anything if they are told of it often enough.

*Fifteen*

Here's a secret. No writer likes writing, at least not one in a hundred, and the exception, ten to one, is a howling mediocrity. That's a fact. But all the same, they're miserable if they don't write.

*Sixteen*

The first and noblest aim of imaginative literature is not either to tickle or to stab the sensibilities, but to render a coherent view of life's apparent incoherence, to give shape to the amorphous, to discover beauty which was hidden, to reveal essential truth.

*Seventeen*

There is a theory that a great public can appreciate a great novel, that the highest modern expression of literary art need not appeal in vain to the average reader. And I believe this to be true — provided that such a novel is written with intent, and with a full knowledge of the peculiar conditions to be satisfied; I believe that a novel could be written which would unite in a mild ecstasy of praise the two extremes — the most inclusive majority and the most exclusive minority.

*Eighteen*

“Give us more brains, Lord!” ejaculated a great writer. Personally, I think he would have been wiser if he had asked first for the power to keep in order such brains as we have.

*Nineteen*

Under the incentive of a woman's eyes, of what tremendous efforts is a clever man not capable, and, deprived of it, to what depths of stagnation will he not descend!

*Twenty*

Elegance is a form of beauty. It not only enhances beauty, but it is the one thing which will console the eye for the absence of beauty.

*Twenty-one*

There are several ways of entering upon journalism. One is at once to found or purchase a paper, and thus achieve the editorial chair at a single step. This course is often adopted in novels, sometimes with the happiest results; and much less often in real life, where the end is invariably and inevitably painful.

*Twenty-two*

Existence rightly considered is a fair compromise between two instincts—the instinct of hoping one day to live, and the instinct to live here and now.

*Twenty-three*

Your own mind is a sacred enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter except by your permission.



*Twenty-four*

The average man is not half enough of an egotist. If egotism means a terrific interest in one's self, egotism is absolutely essential to efficient living.

*Twenty-five*

Events have no significance except by virtue of the ideas from which they spring; the clash of events is the clash of ideas, and out of this clash the moral lesson inevitably emerges, whether we ask for it or no. Hence every great book is a great moral book, and there is a true and fine sense in which the average reader is justified in regarding art as the handmaid of morality.

*Twenty-six*

*William Shakespeare's Birthday*

Shakespeare is "taught" in schools; that is to say, the Board of Education and all authorities pedagogic bind themselves together in a determined effort to make every boy in the land a lifelong enemy of Shakespeare. It is a mercy they don't "teach" Blake.

*Twenty-seven*

*Herbert Spencer's Birthday*

There are those who assert that Spencer was not a supreme genius! At any rate he taught me intellectual courage; he taught me that nothing is sacred that will not bear inspection; and I adore his memory.

*Twenty-eight*

Unite the colossal with the gaudy, and you will not achieve the sublime; but, unless you are deterred by humility and a sense of humour, you may persuade yourself that you have done so, and certainly most people will credit you with the genuine feat.

*Twenty-nine*

The average reader (like Goethe and Ste. Beuve) has his worse and his better self, and there are times when he will yield to the former; but on the whole his impulses are good. In every writer who earns his respect and enduring love there is some central righteousness, which is capable of being traced and explained, and at which it is impossible to sneer.

*Thirty*

Literature is the art of using words. This is not a platitude, but a truth of the first importance, a truth so profound that many writers never get down to it, and so subtle that many other writers who think they see it never in fact really comprehend it. The business of the author is with words. The practisers of other arts, such as music and painting, deal with ideas and emotions, but only the author has to deal with them by means of words. Words are his exclusive possession among creative artists and craftsmen. They are his raw material, his tools and instruments, his manufactured product, his alpha and omega. He may abound in ideas and emotions of the finest kind, but those ideas and emotions cannot be said to have an effective existence until they are expressed; they are limited to the extent of their expression; and their expression is limited to the extent of the author's skill in the use of words. I smile when I hear people say, "If I could *write*, if I could only put down what I feel — !"

Such people beg the whole question. The ability to *write* is the sole thing peculiar to literature — not the ability to think nor the ability to feel, but the ability to write, to utilise words.

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# May

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## One

Only a small minority of authors overwrite themselves. Most of the good and the tolerable ones do not write enough.

## Two

The entire business of success is a gigantic tacit conspiracy on the part of the minority to deceive the majority.

## Three

There are at least three women-journalists in Europe to-day whose influence is felt in Cabinets and places where they govern (proving that sex is not a bar to the proper understanding of *la haute politique*); whereas the man who dares to write on fashions does not exist.

## Four

Habits are the very dickens to change.

*Five*

Not only is art a factor in life; it is a factor in all lives. The division of the world into two classes, one of which has a monopoly of what is called "artistic feeling," is arbitrary and false. Everyone is an artist, more or less; that is to say, there is no person quite without that faculty of poetising, which, by seeing beauty, creates beauty, and which, when it is sufficiently powerful and articulate, constitutes the musical composer, the architect, the imaginative writer, the sculptor, and the painter.

*Six*

Is it nothing to you to learn to understand that the world is not a dull place?

*Seven*

In neither faith nor enthusiasm can a child compete with a convinced adult. No child could believe in anything as passionately as the modern millionaire believes in money, or as the modern social reformer believes in the virtue of Acts of Parliament.

*E i g h t*

Literature, instead of being an accessory, is the fundamental *sine qua non* of complete living.

*N i n e*

No novelist, however ingenious, who does not write what he feels, and what, by its careful finish, approximately pleases himself, can continue to satisfy the average reader. He may hang for years precariously on the skirts of popularity, but in the end he will fall; he will be found out.

*T e n*

Only the fool and the very young expect happiness. The wise merely hope to be interested, at least not to be bored, in their passage through this world. Nothing is so interesting as love and grief, and the one involves the other.

*E l e v e n*

One of the commonest characteristics of the successful man is his idleness, his immense capacity for wasting time.

*Twelve*

People who regard literary taste simply as an accomplishment, and literature simply as a distraction, will never truly succeed, either in acquiring the accomplishment or in using it half-acquired as a distraction.

*Thirteen*

The finest souls have their reactions, their rebellions against wise reason.

*Fourteen*

My theory is that politeness, instead of decreasing with intimacy — should increase! And when I say "Politeness" I mean common, superficial politeness. I don't mean the deep-down sort of thing that you can only detect with a divining-rod.

*Fifteen*

Marcus Aurelius is assuredly regarded as the greatest of writers in the human machine school, and not to read him daily is considered by many to be a bad habit.



*Sixteen*

Part of the secret of Balzac's unique power over the reader is the unique tendency of his own interest in the thing to be told.

*Seventeen*

*"Anna of the Five Towns" finished 1901*

The art of fiction is the art of telling a story. This statement is not so obvious and unnecessary as it may seem. Most beginners and many "practised hands" attend to all kinds of things before they attend to the story. With them the art of fiction is the art of describing character or landscape, of getting "atmosphere," and of being humorous, pathetic, flippant, or terrifying; while the story is a perfunctory excuse for these feats. They are so busy with the traditional paraphernalia of fiction, with the tricks of the craft, that what should be the principal business is reduced to a subsidiary task. They forget that character, landscape, atmosphere, humour, pathos, etc., are not ends in themselves, but only means toward an end.

*Eighteen*

How true it is that the human soul is solitary, that content is the only true riches, and that to be happy we must be good.

*Nineteen*

Men of letters who happen to have genius do not write for men of letters. They write, as Wagner was proud to say he composed, for the ordinary person.

*Twenty*

Great success never depends on the practice of the humbler virtues, though it may occasionally depend on the practice of the prouder vices.

*Twenty-one*

“I’ve been to the National Gallery twice, and, upon my word, I was almost the only person there! And it’s free, too! People don’t *want* picture-galleries. If they did, they’d go. Who ever saw a public-house empty, or Peter Robinson’s? And you have to pay there!”

*Twenty-two*

He who has not been “presented to the freedom” of literature has not wakened up out of his prenatal sleep. He is merely not born. He can’t see; he can’t hear; he can’t feel in any full sense. He can only eat his dinner.

*Twenty-three*

All the arts are a conventionalisation, an ordering of nature.

*Twenty-four*

The aim of literary study is not to amuse the hours of leisure; it is to awake oneself, it is to be alive, to intensify one’s capacity for pleasure, for sympathy, and for comprehension.

*Twenty-five*

Like every aging artist of genuine accomplishment, he knew — none better — that there is no satisfaction save the satisfaction of fatigue after honest endeavour. He knew — none better — that wealth and glory and fine clothes are naught, and that striving is all.

*Twenty-six*

Prepare to live by all means, but for Heaven's sake do not forget to live.

*Twenty-seven*

*My Birthday*

Sometimes I suddenly halt and address myself: "You may be richer or you may be poorer; you may live in greater pomp and luxury, or in less. The point is, that you will always be, essentially, what you are now. You have no real satisfaction to look forward to except the satisfaction of continually inventing, fancying, imagining, scribbling. Say another thirty years of these emotional ingenuities, these interminable variations on the theme of beauty. Is it good enough?" And I answered: "Yes." But who knows? Who can preclude the regrets of the dying couch?

*Twenty-eight*

The balanced sanity of a great mind makes impossible exaggeration, and, therefore, distortion.

*Twenty-nine*

No art that is not planned in form is worth consideration, and no life that is not planned in convention can ever be satisfactory.

*Thirty*

The value of restraint is seldom inculcated upon women. Indeed, its opposites—gush and a tendency to hysteria—are regarded, in many respectable quarters, as among the proper attributes of true womanliness; attributes to be artistically cultivated.

*Thirty-one*

There grows in the North Country a certain kind of youth of whom it may be said that he is born to be a Londoner. The metropolis, and everything that appertains to it, that comes down from it, that goes up into it, has for him an imperious fascination. Long before schooldays are over he learns to take a doleful pleasure in watching the exit of the London train from the railway

station. He stands by the hot engine and envies the very stoker. Gazing curiously into the carriages he wonders that men and women, who in a few hours will be treading streets called Piccadilly and the Strand, can contemplate the immediate future with so much apparent calmness; some of them even have the audacity to look bored. He finds it difficult to keep from throwing himself in the guard's van as it glides past him; and not until the last coach is a speck upon the distance does he turn away and, nodding absently to the ticket-clerk, who knows him well, go home to nurse a vague ambition and dream of town.

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# *June*

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## *One*

To cultivate and nourish a grievance when you have five hundred pounds in your pocket, in cash, is the most difficult thing in the world.

## *Two*

The full beauty of an activity is never brought out until it is subjected to discipline and strict ordering and nice balancing.

## *Three*

The unfading charm of classical music is that you never tire of it.

## *Four*

The spirit of literature is unifying; it joins the candle and the star, and by the magic of an image shows that the beauty of the greater is in the less.

*Five*

If people, by merely wishing to do so, could regularly and seriously read, observe, write, and use every faculty and sense, there would be very little mental inefficiency.

*Six*

Laws and rules, forms and ceremonies, are good in themselves, from a merely æsthetic point of view, apart from their social value and necessity.

*Seven*

Fashionable women have a manner of sitting down quite different from that of ordinary women. They only touch the back of the chair at the top. They don't loll but they only escape lolling by dint of gracefulness. It is an affair of curves, slants, descents, nicely calculated. They elaborately lead your eye downwards over gradually increasing expanses, and naturally you expect to see their feet — and you don't see their feet. The thing is apt to be disturbing to unhabituated beholders.



*E i g h t*

There are moments in the working day of every novelist when he feels deeply that anything—road-mending, shop-walking, housebreaking—would be better than this eternal torture of the brain; but such moments pass.

*N i n e*

During a long and varied career as a bachelor, I have noticed that marriage is usually the death of politeness between a man and a woman. I have noticed that the stronger the passion the weaker the manners.

*T e n*

My sense of security amid the collisions of existence lies in the firm consciousness that just as my body is the servant of my mind, so is my mind the servant of *me*.

*E l e v e n*

The fault of the epoch is the absence of meditateness.

*Twelve*

People who don't want to live, people who would sooner hibernate than feel intensely, will be wise to eschew literature.

*Thirteen*

No one is so sure of achieving the aims of the literary craftsman as the man who has something to say and wishes to say it simply and have done with it.

*Fourteen*

The mind can only be conquered by regular meditation, by deciding beforehand what direction its activity ought to take, and insisting that its activity take that direction; also by never leaving it idle, undirected, masterless, to play at random like a child in the streets after dark.

*Fifteen*

The enterprise of forming one's literary taste is an agreeable one; if it is not agreeable it cannot succeed.

*S i x t e e n*

The attitude of the average decent person towards the classics of his own tongue is one of distrust — I had almost said, of fear.

*S e v e n t e e n*

Am I, a portion of the Infinite Force that existed billions of years ago, and which will exist billions of years hence, going to allow myself to be worried by any terrestrial physical or mental event? I am not.

*E i g h t e e n*

There is not a successful inexpert author writing to-day who would not be more successful — who would not be better esteemed and in receipt of a larger income — if he had taken the trouble to become expert. Skill does count; skill is always worth its cost in time and labour.

*N i n e t e e n*

It is easier to go down a hill than up, but the view is from the top.

*Twenty*

For me there is no supremacy in art. When fifty artists have contrived to be supreme, supremacy becomes impossible. Take a little song by Grieg. It is perfect, it is supreme. No one could be greater than Grieg was great when he wrote that song. The whole last act of *The Twilight of the Gods* is not greater than a little song of Grieg's.

*Twenty-one*

We talked books. We just simply enumerated books without end, praising or damning them, and arranged authors in neat pews, like cattle in classes at an agricultural show. No pastime is more agreeable to people who have the book disease, and none more quickly fleets the hours, and none is more delightfully futile.

*Twenty-two*

The law of gravity is absurd and indefensible when you fall downstairs; but you obey it.

*Twenty-three*

It is difficult to make a reputation, but it is even more difficult seriously to mar a reputation once properly made — so faithful is the public.

*Twenty-four*

That which has cost a sacrifice is always endeared.

*Twenty-five*

If literary aspirants genuinely felt that literature was the art of using words, bad, slipshod writing — writing that stultifies the thought and emotion which it is designed to render effective — would soon be a thing of the past. For they would begin at the beginning as apprentices to all other arts are compelled to. The serious student of painting who began his apprenticeship by trying to paint a family group, would be regarded as a lunatic. But the literary aspirant who begins with a novel is precisely that sort of lunatic, and the fact that he sometimes gets himself into print does not in the least mitigate his lunacy.

*Twenty-six*

In spite of all the differences which we have invented, mankind is a fellowship of brothers, overshadowed by insoluble and fearful mysteries, and dependent upon mutual goodwill and trust for the happiness it may hope to achieve.

*Twenty-seven*

The brain is a servant, exterior to the central force of the Ego. If it is out of control, the reason is not that it is uncontrollable but merely that its discipline has been neglected.

*Twenty-eight*

I have been told by one of our greatest novelists that he constantly reads the dictionary, and that in his youth he read the dictionary through several times. I may recount the anecdote of Buckle, the historian of civilisation, who, when a certain dictionary was mentioned in terms of praise, said: "Yes, it is one of the few dictionaries I have read through with pleasure."

*Twenty-nine*

The public may, and generally does, admire a great artist. But it begins (and sometimes ends) by admiring him for the wrong things. Shakespeare is more highly regarded for his philosophy than for his poetry, as the applause at any performance of "Hamlet" will prove. Balzac conquers by that untamed exuberance and those crude effects of melodrama which are the least valuable parts of him.

*Thirty*

You cannot divide literature into two elements and say: This is matter and that style. Further, the significance and the worth of literature are to be comprehended and assessed in the same way as the significance and the worth of any other phenomenon: by the exercise of common-sense. Common-sense will tell you that nobody, not even a genius, can be simultaneously vulgar and distinguished, or beautiful and ugly, or precise and vague, or tender and harsh. And common-sense will there-

fore tell you that to try to set up vital contradictions between matter and style is absurd. If you refer literature to the standards of life, common-sense will at once decide which quality should count heaviest in your esteem.



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# July

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## *One*

When one has really something to say, one does not use clichés; one cannot.

## *Two*

The extinguishing of desire, with an accompanying indifference, be it high or low, is bad for youth.

## *Three*

Do you suppose that if the fame of Shakespeare depended on the man in the street, it would survive a fortnight?

## *Four*

Common-sense will solve any problem — any! — always provided it is employed simultaneously with politeness.

*Five*

London is the most provincial town in England — invariably vulgar, reactionary, hysterical, and behind the rest of the country. A nice sort of place England would be if we in the provinces had to copy London.

*Six*

Progress is the gradual result of the unending battle between human reason and human instinct, in which the former slowly but surely wins.

*Seven*

As an athlete trains, as an acrobat painfully tumbles in private, so must the literary aspirant write.

*Eight*

A classic is a work which gives pleasure to the minority which is intensely and permanently interested in literature.

*N i n e*

It is said that geography makes history. In England, and especially in London, weather makes a good deal of history.

*T e n*

The one primary essential to literary taste is a hot interest in literature. If you have that, all the rest will come.

*E l e v e n*

In the Five Towns human nature is reported to be so hard that you can break stones on it. Yet sometimes it softens, and then we have one of our rare idylls of which we are very proud, while pretending not to be. The soft and delicate South would possibly not esteem highly our idylls, as such. Nevertheless they are our idylls, idyllic for us, and reminding us, by certain symptoms, that, though we never cry, there is concealed somewhere within our bodies a fount of happy tears.

*Twelve*

Reason is the basis of personal dignity.

*Thirteen*

It is by the passionate few that the renown of genius is kept alive from one generation to another.

*Fourteen*

We are all of us the same in essence; what separates us is merely differences in our respective stages of evolution.

*Fifteen*

It is well known that dignity will only bleed while you watch it. Avert your eyes and it instantly dries up.

*Sixteen*

All literature is the expression of feeling, of passion, of emotion, caused by a sensation of the interestingness of life.

*Seventeen*

Just as science is the development of common-sense, so is literature the development of common daily speech.

*Eighteen*

Every man who thinks clearly can write clearly, if not with grace and technical correctness.

*Nineteen*

It is important, if you wish ultimately to have a wide, catholic taste, to guard against the too common assumption that nothing modern will stand comparison with the classics.

*Twenty*

In the matter of its own special activities the brain is usually undisciplined and unreliable. We never know what it will do next.

*Twenty-one*

It's the dodge of every begging-letter writer in England to mark his envelope "Private and Urgent."

*Twenty-two*

Women grow old; women cease to learn; but men, never.

*Twenty-three*

In literature, but in nothing else, I am a propagandist; I am not content to keep my opinion and let others keep theirs. To have a worthless book in my house (save in the way of business), to know that any friend is enjoying it, actually distresses me. That book must go, the pretensions of that book must be exposed, if I am to enjoy peace of mind.

*Twenty-four*

I have often thought: If a son could look into a mother's heart, what an eyeopener he would have!

*T w e n t y - f i v e*

When a writer expresses his individuality and his mood with accuracy, lucidity, and sincerity, and with an absence of ugliness, then he achieves good style. Style — it cannot be too clearly understood — is not a certain splendid something which the writer adds to his meaning. It is *in* the meaning; it is that part of the meaning which specially reflects his individuality and his mood.

*T w e n t y - s i x*

Crime is simply a convenient monosyllable which we apply to what happens when the brain and the heart come into conflict and the brain is defeated.

*T w e n t y - s e v e n*

Reflect that, as a rule, the people whom you have come to esteem communicated themselves to you gradually, that they did not begin the entertainment with fireworks.

*Twenty-eight*

To devise the contents of an issue, to plan them, to balance them; to sail with this wind and tack against that; to keep a sensitive, cool finger on the faintly beating pulse of the terrible many-headed patron; to walk in a straight line through a forest black as midnight; to guess the riddle of the circulation-book week by week; to know by instinct why Smiths sent in a repeat order, or why Simpkins' was ten quires less; to keep one eye on the majestic march of the world, and the other on the vagaries of a bazaar-reporter who has forgotten the law of libel; these things, and seventy-seven others, are the real journalism. It is these things that make editors sardonic, grey, unapproachable.

*Twenty-nine*

I will be bold enough to say that quite seventy per cent. of ambition is never realised at all, and that ninety per cent. of all realised ambition is fruitless.



*T h i r t y*

To comply with the regulations ordained by English Society for the conduct of successful painters, he ought, first, to have taken the elementary precaution of being born in the United States. He ought, after having refused all interviews for months, to have ultimately granted a special one to a newspaper with the largest circulation. He ought to have returned to England, grown a mane and a tufted tail, and become the king of beasts; or at least to have made a speech at a banquet about the noble and purifying mission of art. Assuredly, he ought to have painted the portrait of his father or grandfather as an artisan to prove that he was not a snob.

*T h i r t y - o n e*

Women enjoy a reputation for slipshod style. They have earned it. A long and intimate familiarity with the manuscript of hundreds of women-writers, renowned and otherwise, has convinced me that not ten per cent. of them can be relied upon to satisfy even the most

ordinary tests in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. I do not hesitate to say that if twenty of the most honoured and popular women-writers were asked to sit for an examination in these simple branches of learning, the general result (granted that a few might emerge with credit) would not only startle themselves, but would provide innocent amusement for the rest of mankind.

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# *August*

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## *One*

My theory is that if a really big concern is properly organized, the boss ought to be absolutely independent of all routine. He ought to be free for anything that turns up unexpectedly.

## *Two*

Often I have felt that: "I know enough, I feel enough. If my future is as long as my past, I shall still not be able to put down the tenth part of what I have already acquired."

## *Three*

In journalism, as probably in no other profession, success depends wholly upon the loyal co-operation, the perfect reliability, of a number of people — some great, some small, but none irresponsible.

*Four*

The significance and the worth of literature are to be comprehended and assessed in the same way as the significance and the worth of any other phenomenon: by the exercise of common-sense.

*Five*

All wrong-doing is done in the sincere belief that it is the best thing to do.

*Six*

There is always a mental inferior handy, just as there is always a being more unhappy than we are.

*Seven*

Often have I said inwardly: "World, when I talk with you, dine with you, wrangle with you, love you, and hate you, I condescend." Every artist has said that. People call it conceit; people may call it what they please.

*Eight*

The artistic pleasures of an uncultivated mind are generally violent.

*Nine*

Literature cannot be said to have served its true purpose until it has been translated into the actual life of him who reads.

*Ten*

When you cannot express yourself, depend upon it that you have nothing precise to express.

*Eleven*

Monotony, solitude, are essential to the full activity of the artist. Just as a horse is seen best when coursing alone over a great plain, so the fierce and callous egotism of the artist comes to its perfection in a vast expanse of custom, leisure, and apparently vacuous reverie.

*Twelve*

There can be no doubt that the average man blames much more than he praises. His instinct is to blame. If he is satisfied he says nothing; if he is not, he most illogically kicks up a row.

*Thirteen*

We can no more spend all our waking hours in consciously striving towards higher things than we can dine exclusively off jam.

*Fourteen*

All spending is a matter of habit.

*Fifteen*

The views from Richmond Hill or Hindhead, or along Pall Mall at sunset, the smell of the earth, the taste of fruit and of kisses — these things are unaffected by the machinations of trusts and the hysteria of stock exchanges.

*Sixteen*

If there is one point common to all classics,  
it is the absence of exaggeration.

*Seventeen*

It is only people of small moral stature  
who have to stand on their dignity.

*Eighteen*

When you live two and a half miles from  
a railway you can cut a dash on an in-  
come which in London spells omnibus  
instead of cab. For myself, I have a  
profound belief in the efficacy of cutting  
a dash.

*Nineteen*

No one can write correctly without de-  
liberately and laboriously learning how  
to write correctly. On the other hand,  
everyone can learn to write correctly  
who takes sufficient trouble. Correct  
writing is a mechanical accomplishment;  
it could be acquired by a stockbroker.

*Twenty*

An understanding appreciation of literature means an understanding appreciation of the world, and it means nothing else.

*Twenty-one*

Much ingenuity with a little money is vastly more profitable and amusing than much money without ingenuity.

*Twenty-two*

Nothing is easier than to explain an accomplished fact in a nice, agreeable, conventional way.

*Twenty-three*

Literature is the art of using words. This is not a platitude, but a truth of the first importance, a truth so profound that many writers never get down to it, and so subtle that many other writers who think they see it never in fact really comprehend it.



*Twenty-four*

In the choice of reading the individual must count; caprice must count, for caprice is often the truest index to the individuality.

*Twenty-five*

There is an infection in the air of London, a zymotic influence which is the mysterious cause of unnaturalness, pose, affectation, artificiality, moral neuritis, and satiety. One loses grasp of the essentials in an undue preoccupation with the vacuities which society has invented. The distractions are too multiform. One never gets a chance to talk common-sense with one's soul.

*Twenty-six*

An early success is a snare. The inexperienced author takes too much for granted. Conceit overcomes him. He regards himself with an undue seriousness. He thinks that he is founded on granite for ever.

*Twenty-seven*

The splendid pertinacity and ingenuity of the American journalist in wringing copy out of any and every side of existence cannot fail to quicken the pulse of those who are accustomed to the soberer, narrower, sleepier ways of English newspapers. Fleet Street pretends to despise and contemn American methods, yet a gradual Americanising of the English press is always taking place, with results on the whole admirable.

*Twenty-eight*

Stand defiantly on your own feet, and do not excuse yourself to yourself.

*Twenty-nine*

This is a matter of daily observation: that people are frantically engaged in attempting to get hold of things which, by universal experience, are hideously disappointing to those who have obtained possession of them.

*Thirty*

It is a current impression that style is something apart from, something foreign to, matter — a beautiful robe which, once it is found, may be used to clothe the nudity of matter. Young writers wander forth searching for style, as one searches for that which is hidden. They might employ themselves as profitably in looking for the noses on their faces. For style is personal, as much a portion of one's self as the voice. It is within, not without; it needs only to be elicited, brought to light.

*Thirty-one*

When I had been in London a decade, I stood aside from myself and reviewed my situation with the godlike and detached impartiality of a trained artistic observer. And what I saw was a young man who pre-eminently knew his way about, and who was apt to be rather too complacent over this fact; a young man with some brilliance but far more shrewdness; a young man with a highly de-

veloped faculty for making a little go a long way; a young man who was accustomed to be listened to when he thought fit to speak, and who was decidedly more inclined to settle questions than to raise them.

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# *September*

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## *One*

It is of no use beginning to air one's views until one has collected an audience.

## *Two*

A man whom fate had pitched into a canal might accomplish miracles in the way of rendering himself amphibian: he might stagger the world by the spectacle of his philosophy under amazing difficulties; people might pay sixpence a head to come and see him; but he would be less of a nincompoop if he climbed out and arranged to live definitely on the bank.

## *Three*

The contemplation of hills is uplifting to the soul; it leads to inspiration and induces nobility of character.

*Four*

Plot is the primary thing in fiction. Only a very clever craftsman can manipulate a feeble plot so as to make it even passably interesting. Whereas, the clumsiest bungler in narration cannot altogether spoil a really sound plot.

*Five*

It cannot be too clearly understood that the professional author, the man who depends entirely on his pen for the continuance of breath, and whose income is at the mercy of an illness or a headache, is eternally compromising between glory and something more edible and warmer at nights. He labours, in the first place, for food, shelter, tailors, a woman, European travel, horses, stalls at the opera, good cigars, ambrosial evenings in restaurants; and he gives glory the best chance he can. I am not speaking of geniuses with a mania for posterity; I am speaking of human beings.

*S i x*

The average man flourishes and finds his ease in an atmosphere of peaceful routine. Men destined for success flourish and find their ease in an atmosphere of collision and disturbance.

*S e v e n*

There are simply thousands of agreeable and good girls who can accomplish herring-bone, omelettes, and simultaneous equations in a breath, as it were. They are all over the kingdom, and may be seen in the streets and lanes thereof about half-past eight in the morning and again about five o'clock in the evening. But the fact is not generally known. Only the stern and base members of School Boards or Education Committees know it. And they are so used to marvels that they make nothing of them.

*E i g h t*

In the sea of literature every part communicates with every other part; there are no land-locked lakes.

*Nine*

With an obedient, disciplined brain a man may live always right up to the standard of his best moments.

*Ten*

~~A~~ prig is a pompous fool who has gone out for a ceremonial walk, and, without knowing it, has lost an important part of his attire, namely, his sense of humour.

*Eleven*

If I have an aptitude for anything at all in letters, it is for criticism. Whenever I read a book of imagination, I am instantly filled with ideas concerning it; I form definite views about its merit or demerit, and, having formed them, I hold those views with strong conviction. Denial of them rouses me; I must thump the table in support of them; I must compel people to believe that what I say is true; I cannot argue without getting serious, in spite of myself.



*T w e l v e*

The great convenience of masterpieces is that they are so astonishingly lucid.

*T h i r t e e n*

It is as well not to chatter too much about what one is doing, and not to betray a too-pained sadness at the spectacle of a whole world deliberately wasting so many hours out of every day, and therefore never really living. It will be found, ultimately, that in taking care of one's self one has quite all one can do.

*F o u r t e e n*

Think as well as read. I know people who read and read, and, for all the good it does them, they might just as well cut bread-and-butter. They take to reading as better men take to drink. They fly through the shires of literature on a motor-car, their sole object being motion. They will tell you how many books they have read in a year.

*Fifteen*

The mass could not, and never at any period of history did, appreciate fine art, but could and would appreciate and support passable deteriorations of fine art.

*Sixteen*

Honesty, in literature as in life, is the quality that counts first and counts last.

*Seventeen*

No author ever lived who could write a page without giving himself away.

*Eighteen*

To be one's natural self is the most difficult thing in literature. To be one's natural self in a drawing-room full of observant eyes is scarcely the gift of the simple debutant, but rather of the experienced diner-out. So in literature: it is not the expert but the unpractised beginner who is guilty of artificiality.

*Nineteen*

Much nonsense has been talked about the short story. It has been asserted that Englishmen cannot write artistic short stories, that the short story does not come naturally to the Anglo-Saxon. Whereas the truth is that nearly all the finest short-story writers in the world today are Englishmen, and some of the most wonderful short stories ever written have been written by Englishmen within the last twenty years.

*Twenty*

If a book really moves you to anger, the chances are that it is a good book.

*Twenty-one*

In the cultivation of the mind one of the most important factors is precisely the feeling of strain, of difficulty, of a task which one part of you is anxious to achieve and another part of you is anxious to shirk.

*Twenty-two*

The very greatest poetry can only be understood and savoured by people who have put themselves through a considerable mental discipline. To others it is an exasperating weariness.

*Twenty-three*

*Samuel Johnson's Birthday*

Even Johnson's Dictionary is packed with emotion.

*Twenty-four*

All blame, uttered or unexpressed, is wrong. I do not blame myself. I can explain myself to myself. I can invariably explain myself.

*Twenty-five*

When one has thoroughly got imbued into one's head the leading truth that nothing happens without a cause, one grows not only large-minded, but large-hearted.

*Twenty-six*

If an editor knows not peace, he knows power. In Fleet Street, as in other streets, the population divides itself into those who want something and those who have something to bestow; those who are anxious to give a lunch, and those who deign occasionally to accept a lunch; those who have an axe to grind, and those who possess the grindstone.

*Twenty-seven*

Regard, for a moment, the average household in the light of a business organisation for lodging and feeding a group of individuals; contrast its lapses, makeshifts, delays, irregularities, continual excuses with the awful precision of a city office. Is it a matter for surprise that the young woman who is accustomed gaily to remark, "Only five minutes late this morning, father," or "I quite forgot to order the coals, dear," confident that a frown or a hard word will end the affair, should carry into business (be it never so grave) the laxities so long permitted her in the home?

*Twenty-eight*

This I know and affirm, that the average woman-journalist is the most loyal, earnest, and teachable person under the sun. I begin to feel sentimental when I think of her astounding earnestness, even in grasping the live coal of English syntax. Syntax, bane of writing-women, I have spent scores of ineffectual hours in trying to inoculate the ungrammatical sex against your terrors!

*Twenty-nine*

I have never refused work when the pay has been good.

*Thirty*

There is no logical answer to a guffaw.

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# *October*

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## *One*

A most curious and useful thing to realise is that one never knows the impression one is creating on other people.

## *Two*

At seventy men begin to be separated from their fellow-creatures. At eighty they are like islets sticking out of a sea. At eighty-five, with their trembling and deliberate speech, they are the abstract voice of human wisdom. They gather wisdom with amazing rapidity in the latter years, and even their folly is wise then.

## *Three*

In its essence all fiction is wildly improbable, and its fundamental improbability is masked by an observance of probability in details.

*Four*

Only reviewers have a prejudice against long novels.

*Five*

The most important of all perceptions is the continual perception of cause and effect — in other words, the perception of the continuous development of the universe — in still other words, the perception of the course of evolution.

*Six*

No reading of books will take the place of a daily, candid, honest examination of what one has recently done, and what one is about to do — of a steady looking at one's self in the face (disconcerting though the sight may be).

*Seven*

The beauty of a classic is not at all apt to knock you down. It will steal over you, rather.



*Eight*

Self-respect is at the root of all purposefulness, and a failure in an enterprise deliberately planned deals a desperate wound at one's self-respect.

*Nine*

A man may be a sub-editor, or even an assistant-editor, for half a lifetime, and yet remain ignorant of the true significance of journalism.

*Ten*

Happiness does not spring from the procuring of physical or mental pleasure, but from the development of reason and the adjustment of conduct to principles.

*Eleven*

The heart is convinced that custom is a virtue. The heart of the dirty working-man rebels when the State insists that he shall be clean, for no other reason than that it is his custom to be dirty.

*Twelve*

To be honest with oneself is not so simple as it appears.

*Thirteen*

“My wife will never understand,” said Mr. Brindley, “that complete confidence between two human beings is impossible.”

*Fourteen*

Demanding honesty from your authors, you must see that you render it yourself.

*Fifteen*

Imagine the technical difficulties of a painter whose canvas was always being rolled off one stick on to another stick, and who was compelled to do his picture inch by inch, seeing nothing but the particular inch which happened to be under his brush. That difficulty is only one of the difficulties of the novelist.

*Sixteen*

It is a fact that few novelists enjoy the creative labour, though most enjoy thinking about the creative labour. Novelists enjoy writing novels no more than ploughmen enjoy following the plough. They regard business as a "grind."

*Seventeen*

The born journalist comes into the world with the fixed notion that nothing under the sun is uninteresting. He says: "I cannot pass along the street, or cut a finger, or marry, or catch a cold or a fish, or go to church, or perform any act whatever, without being impressed anew by the interestingness of mundane phenomena, and without experiencing a desire to share this impression with my fellow-creatures."

*Eighteen*

Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.

*Nineteen*

It is much easier to begin a novel than to finish it. This statement applies to many enterprises, but to none with more force than to a long art-work such as a novel or a play.

*Twenty*

A true book is not always great. But a great book is never untrue.

*Twenty-one*

The impossible had occurred. I was no longer a mere journalist; I was an author. "After all, it's nothing," I said, with that intense and unoriginal humanity which distinguishes all of us. And in a blinding flash I saw that an author was in essence the same thing as a grocer or a duke.

*Twenty-two*

When the reason and the heart come into conflict the heart is invariably wrong.

*Twenty-three*

Marriage is excessively prosaic and eternal,  
not at all what you expect it to be.

*Twenty-four*

I do not forget that the realism of one age is the conventionality of the next. In the main the tendency of art is always to reduce and simplify its conventions, thus necessitating an increase of virtuosity in order to obtain the same effects of shapeliness and rhythm.

*Twenty-five*

For the majority of people the earth is a dull planet. It is only a Stevenson who can say: "I never remember being bored," and one may fairly doubt whether even Stevenson uttered truth when he made that extraordinary statement. None of us escapes boredom entirely; some of us, indeed, are bored during the greater part of our lives. The fact is unpalatable, but it is a fact.

*Twenty-six*

An average of over an hour a day given to the mind should permanently and completely enliven the whole activity of the mind.

*Twenty-seven*

A large class of people positively resent being thrilled by a work of fiction, and the domestic serial is meant to appeal to this class.

*Twenty-eight*

It is natural that people who concern themselves with art only in their leisure moments, demanding from it nothing but a temporary distraction, should prefer the obvious to the recondite, and should walk regardless of beauty unless it forces itself upon their attention by means of exaggerations and advertisement. The public wants to be struck, hit squarely in the face; then it will take notice.

*Twenty-nine*

When a book attains a large circulation one usually says that it succeeds. But the fine books succeed of themselves, by their own virtue, and apart from the acclamatory noises of fame. Immure them in cabinets, cast them into Sahara; still they imperturbably succeed. If, on a rare occasion, such a book sells by scores of thousands, it is not the book but the public which succeeds; it is not the book but the public which has emerged splendidly from a trial.

*Thirty*

The artists who have courage fully to exploit their own temperaments are always sufficiently infrequent to be peculiarly noticeable and welcome. Still more rare are they who, leaving it to others to sing and emphasise the ideal and obvious beauties which all can in some measure see, will exclusively exercise the artist's prerogative as an explorer of hidden and recondite beauty in unsuspected places.

*Thirty-one*

Bad books, by flattering you, by caressing, by appealing to the weak or the base in you, will often persuade you what fine and splendid books they are.



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# *November*

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## *One*

It is well to remind ourselves that literature is first and last a means of life, and that the enterprise of forming one's literary taste is an enterprise of learning how best to use this means of life.

## *Two*

Instead of saying, "Sorry I can't see you, old chap, but I have to run off to the tennis club," you must say, ". . . But I have to work." This, I admit, is intensely difficult to say. Tennis is so much more urgent than the immortal soul.

## *Three*

A talent never persuades or encourages the owner of it; it drives him with a whip.

*Four*

One of the chief things which one has to learn is that the mental faculties are capable of a continuous hard activity; they do not tire like an arm or a leg. All they want is change, not rest, except in sleep.

*Five*

Characterisation, the feat of individualising characters, is the inmost mystery of imaginative literary art. It is of the very essence of the novel. It never belongs to this passage or that. It is implicit in the whole. It is always being done, and is never finished till the last page is written.

*Six*

Can you deny that when you have something definite to look forward to at eventide, something that is to employ all your energy, the thought of that something gives a glow and a more intense vitality to the whole day?

*Seven*

Most good books have begun by causing anger which disguised itself as contempt.

*Eight*

When a thing is supreme there is nothing to be said.

*Nine*

*Ivan Sergeïtch Turgenev's Birthday*

The author of a miracle like *On the Eve* may be born, but he is also made. In the matter of condensation alone Turgenev was unique among the great literary artificers. He could say more in a chapter of two thousand words than any other novelist that ever lived. What he accomplishes again and again in a book of sixty thousand words, Tolstoi could not have accomplished under a quarter of a million.

*Ten*

Fine taste in fiction is almost as rare among novelists as among the general public.

*Eleven*

I have never once produced any literary work without a preliminary incentive quite other than the incentive of ebullient imagination. I have never "wanted to write," until the extrinsic advantages of writing had presented themselves to me.

*Twelve*

Beauty is strangely various. There is the beauty of light and joy and strength exulting; but there is also the beauty of shade, of sorrow and sadness, and of humility oppressed. The spirit of the sublime dwells not only in the high and remote; it shines unperceived amid all the usual meannesses of our daily existence.

*Thirteen*

Always give your fellow creature credit for good intentions. Do not you, though sometimes mistakenly, always act for the best? You know you do. And are you alone among mortals in rectitude?

*Fourteen*

There is no such case as the average case, just as there is no such man as the average man. Every man and every man's case is special.

*Fifteen*

Outside the department of fiction there are two kinds of authors — those who want to write because they have something definite to say, and those who want something definite to say because they can write.

*Sixteen*

A lover is one who deludes himself; a journalist is one who deludes himself and other people.

*Seventeen*

Although a very greedy eater of literature, I can only enjoy reading when I have little time for reading. Give me three hours of absolute leisure with nothing to do but read, and I instantly become almost incapable of the act.

*Eighteen*

I would point out that literature by no means comprises the whole field of knowledge, and that the disturbing thirst to improve one's self — to increase one's knowledge — may well be slaked quite apart from literature.

*Nineteen*

The public, by its casual approval, may give notoriety and a vogue which passes, but it is incapable of the sustained ardour of appreciation which alone results in authentic renown. It is incapable because it is nonchalant. To the public art is a very little thing — a distraction, the last resort against *ennui*. To the critics art looms enormous. They do not merely possess views; they are possessed by them. Their views amount to a creed, and that creed must be spread. Quiescence is torment to the devotee. He cannot cry peace when there is no peace. Passionate conviction, like murder, will out. "I believe; therefore you must believe": that is the motto which moves the world.

*Twenty*

Only those who have lived at the full stretch seven days a week for a long time can appreciate the full beauty of a regularly recurring idleness.

*Twenty-one*

Publishers as a commercial class are neither more nor less honourable than any other commercial class, and authors are neither more nor less honourable than publishers. In the world of commerce one fights for one's own hand and keeps within the law; the code is universally understood, and the man who thinks it ought to be altered because *he* happens to be inexperienced, is a fool.

*Twenty-two*

There can be no sort of doubt that unless I was prepared to flout the wisdom of the ages, I ought to have refused his suggestion. But is not the wisdom of the ages a medicine for majorities? And, indeed, I was prepared to flout it, as in our highest and our lowest moments we often are.

*Twenty-three*

London is chiefly populated by greyhaired men who for twenty years have been about to become journalists and authors. And but for a fortunate incident — the thumb of my Fate has always been turned up — I might ere this have fallen back into that tragic rearguard of Irresolutes.

*Twenty-four*

I think it is rather fine, this necessity for the tense bracing of the will before anything worth doing can be done. I rather like it myself. I feel it to be the chief thing that differentiates me from the cat by the fire.

*Twenty-five*

The most important preliminary to the task of arranging one's life so that one may live fully and comfortably within one's daily budget of twenty-four hours, is the calm realisation of the extreme difficulty of the task, of the sacrifices and the endless effort it demands.



*Twenty-six*

Whatever sin a man does he either does for his own benefit or for the benefit of society.

*Twenty-seven*

The critic's first requisite is that he should be interested. A man may have an instinctive good taste, but if his attitude is one of apathy, then he is not a true critic. The opinions of the public are often wrong; the opinions of the critic are usually right. But the fundamental difference between these two bodies does not lie here; it lies in the fact that the critics "care," while the public does not care.

*Twenty-eight*

When, after the theatre, a woman precedes a man into a carriage, does she not publish and glory in the fact that she is his? Is it not the most delicious of avowals? There is something in the enforced bend of one's head as one steps in. And when the man shuts the door with a masculine snap —

*Twenty-nine*

Ardour in well-doing is a misleading and a treacherous thing. It cries out loudly for employment; you can't satisfy it at first; it wants more and more; it is eager to move mountains and divert the course of rivers; it isn't content till it perspires. And then, too often, when it feels the perspiration on its brow, it wearies all of a sudden and dies, without even putting itself to the trouble of saying, "I've had enough of this."

*Thirty*

Literature exists so that where one man has lived finely ten thousand may afterwards live finely.

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# *December*

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## *One*

To hear a master play a scale, to catch that measured, tranquil succession of notes, each a different jewel of equal splendour, each dying precisely when the next was born — this is to perceive at last what music is made of, to have glimpses of the divine magic that is the soul of the divinest art.

## *Two*

When the swimmer unclothes, and abandons himself to the water, naked, letting the water caress the whole of his nakedness, moving his limbs in voluptuous ease untrammelled by even the lightest garment, then, as never under other conditions, he is aware of his body; and perhaps the thought occurs to him that to live otherwise than in that naked freedom is not to live.

*Three*

Has it never struck you that you have at hand a machine wonderful beyond all mechanisms in sheds, intricate, delicately adjustable, of astounding and miraculous possibilities, interminably interesting? That machine is yourself.

*Four*

The sound reputation of an artist is originally due never to the public, but to the critics. I do not use the word "critic" in a limited, journalistic sense; it is meant to include all those persons, whether scribes or not, who have genuine convictions about art.

*Five*

The movement for opening museums on Sundays is the most natural movement that could be conceived. For if ever a resort was invented and fore-ordained to chime with the true spirit of the British Sabbath, that resort is the average museum.

*S i x*

The manufacture of musical comedy is interesting and curious, but I am not aware that it has anything to do with dramatic art.

*S e v e n*

Though you have the wealth of a cloak-room attendant at the Carlton Hotel, you cannot buy yourself a minute more time than I have, or the cat by the fire has.

*E i g h t*

The man of business, even in the very daily act of deceit, will never yield up the conviction that, after all, at bottom he is crystal honest. It is his darling delusion.

*N i n e*

Happiness is not joy, and it is not tranquillity. It is something deeper and something more disturbing. Perhaps it is an acute sense of life, a realisation of one's secret being, a continual renewal of the mysterious savour of existence.

*T e n*

Our best plays, as works of art, are strikingly inferior to our best novels. A large section of the educated public ignores the modern English theatre as being unworthy of attention.

*E l e v e n*

Romance, interest, dwell not in the thing seen, but in the eye of the beholder.

*T w e l v e*

Every bookish person has indulgently observed the artless absorption and surrender with which a "man of action" reads when by chance a book captures him, his temporary monomania, his insistence that the bookish person shall share his joy, and his impatience at any exhibition of indifference. For the moment the terrible man of action is a child again; he who has straddled the world is like a provincial walking with open-mouthed delight through the streets of the capital.

*Thirteen*

The woman who quarrels with a maid is clumsy, and the woman who quarrels with a good maid is either a fool or in a nervous, hysterical condition, or both.

*Fourteen*

Men have a habit of taking themselves for granted, and that habit is responsible for nine-tenths of the boredom and despair on the face of the planet.

*Fifteen*

Anyone can learn to write, and to write well, in any given style; but to see, to discern the interestingness which is veiled from the crowd — that comes not by tuition; rather by intuition.

*Sixteen*

The forms of faith change, but the spirit of faith is immortal amid its endless vicissitudes.

*Seventeen*

Consider the attitude of Dissenters of the trading and industrial classes towards the art of literature . . . That attitude is at once timid, antagonistic, and resentful. Timid, because print still has for the unlettered a mysterious sanction; antagonistic because Puritanism and the arts have by no means yet settled their quarrel; resentful because the autocratic power of art over the imagination and the intelligence is felt without being understood.

*Eighteen*

It is said that men are only interested in themselves. The truth is that, as a rule, men are interested in every mortal thing except themselves.

*Nineteen*

It is less difficult, I should say, to succeed moderately in journalism than to succeed moderately in dressmaking.



*Twenty*

Music cannot be said. One art cannot be translated into another.

*Twenty-one*

A deep-seated objection to the intrusion of even the most loved male at certain times is common, I think, to all women. Women are capable of putting love aside, like a rich dress, and donning the *peignoir* of matter-of-fact dailiness, in a way which is an eternal enigma to men.

*Twenty-two*

There's nothing like a corpse for putting everything at sixes and sevens.

*Twenty-three*

Great grief is democratic, levelling — not downwards but upwards. It strips away the inessential and makes brothers. It is impatient with all the unavailable inventions which obscure the brotherhood of mankind.

*Twenty-four*

The expression of the soul by means of the brain and body is what we call the art of "living."

*Twenty-five*

That Christmas has lost some of its magic is a fact that the common-sense of the western hemisphere will not dispute. To blink the fact is infantile. To confront it, to try to understand it, to reckon with it, and to obviate any evil that may attach to it — this course alone is meet for an honest man.

*Twenty-six*

It must be admitted in favour of the Five Towns that, when its inhabitants spill milk, they do not usually sit down on the pavement and adulterate the milk with their tears. They pass on. Such passing on is termed callous and coldhearted in the rest of England, which loves to sit down on pavements and weep into irretrievable milk.

*Twenty-seven*

At thirty the chances are that a man will understand better the draughts of a chimney than his own respiratory apparatus — to name one of the simple, obvious things; and as for understanding the working of his own brain — what an idea!

*Twenty-eight*

Science is making it increasingly difficult to conceive matter apart from spirit. Everything lives. Even my razor gets "tired."

*Twenty-nine*

No book in any noble library is so interesting, so revealing, as the catalogue of it.

*Thirty*

Love is the greatest thing in life; one may, however, question whether it should be counted greater than life itself.

*Thirty-one*

The indispensable preparation for brain-discipline is to form the habit of regarding one's brain as an instrument exterior to one's self, like a tongue or a foot.

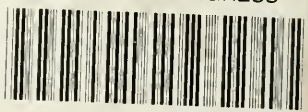


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